

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4447

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

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TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER-DESIGNATE MOSHE DAYAN

1. I MET WITH MOSHE DAYAN AT HIS HOME JUNE 18. WE TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT THE FAMILIAR DILEMMAS INVOLVED IN RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, AND ABOUT HIS IDEAS AS TO MANY OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED. DAYAN RATHER PLAINTIVELY STRESSED AT THE OUTSET, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAS NOT SEEN BEGIN IN SOME TIME AND HAS HAD ONLY TWO OR THREE TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM. THEREFORE, HE CLAIMED TO BE UNFAMILIAR WITH BEGIN'S CURRENT VIEWS --AND CAUTIONED ME THAT HE COULD NOT ASSURE ME BEGIN WOULD AGREE WITH ALL, OR ANY, OF HIS IDEAS. WE AGREED TO REGARD OUR CONVERSATION AS PURELY A PERSONAL EXPLORATION OF PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES. (EPY EVRON WAS, HOWEVER, PRESENT AND BUSILY TAKING NOTES.)

2. TO REPORT IN DETAIL ON THE CONVERSATION WOULD BE TO GIVE IT MORE IMPORTANCE AT THIS STAGE THAN I BELIEVE
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IT DESERVES. MY CHIEF IMPRESSION WAS THAT DAYAN REMAINS COMPLETELY PRAGMATIC, OPEN TO SEEING THE ISSUES FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE AND THAT OF THE VARIOUS ARAB LEADERS, BUT QUITE PESSIMISTIC.

3. DAYAN'S ANALYSIS REMAINS ESSENTIALLY THAT WHICH HE GAVE SENATOR STONE. HE IS MORE THAN WILLING TO TRY

FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT, BUT SEES NO CHANCE OF ACHIEVING ONE AND HOPES TO FALL BACK TO SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT AND SYRIA--NOT FOR FURTHER INTERIM AGREEMENTS BUT RATHER FOR "FINAL" AGREEMENTS WITH EACH IN WHICH ALL OR NEARLY ALL OF THEIR TERRITORY WOULD BE RETURNED IN EXCHANGE FOR SOMETHING LESS THAN TOTAL "PEACE," A GOAL HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO BE OBTAINABLE IN THIS GENERATION. HE RECOGNIZES ALL THE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES; BELIEVES THAT EGYPT COULD AGREE ONLY IF SYRIA WERE TO DO SO; AND THINKS BOTH COULD AGREE ONLY IF SAUDI ARABIA GAVE STRONG SUPPORT. SO DAYAN SEES SAUDI ARABIA AS THE KEY--AND HOPES WE CAN TURN IT.

4. AS FOR THE WEST BANK, DAYAN SEES NO CHANCE OF A NEGOTIABLE DIVIDING LINE AND HE COMPLETELY RULES OUT A SEPARATE STATE. HE WOULD CONCENTRATE ON TRYING TO PERMANENTLY SETTLE THE REFUGEES IN GAZA AND JORDAN--WHILE KEEPING THE WEST BANK'S STATUS AMBIGUOUS, MOVING PERHAPS IN THE DIRECTION OF SOME SORT OF SHARED ISRAELI/JORDANIAN ADMINISTRATION AS AN INTERIM STEP. HE SAYS HE HOPES TO SEE KING HUSSEIN HIMSELF PRIVATELY SOON--AND THINKS HE CAN ARRANGE TO DO SO. JUST WHAT HE PLANS TO SAY IS LESS CLEAR* BUT I INFER HE WANTS TO CONCENTRATE ON A CONTINUING MODUS VIVENDI--OR AS HE SAID TO SENATOR STONE, "MORE OF THE SAME."
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5. DAYAN DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER BEGIN WILL WISH HIM TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO WASHINGTON OR NOT; HE ASSUMES NOT. BUT HE WOULD LIKE TO GO, EITHER WITH HIM OR SOMEWHAT LATER TO FOLLOW UP. HE SAID HE WAS CERTAIN HE SHOULD NOT GO BEFORE BEGIN. WE AGREED THAT THIS IS A DELICATE TOPIC FOR HIM AND BEGIN TO SORT OUT; I TOLD HIM I HAD NO INTENTION OF RAISING THE QUESTION MYSELF WITH BEGIN.
LEWIS

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